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ABSTRACT

A report is given of the work of a study committee selected to plan and implement a sex education program at the secondary level. The committee was comprised of students, parents, and teachers. After examining what other schools in the area had done to meet sex education needs, the committee wrote a statement of philosophy and purpose, reacted to a model for a sex education program, and served as a communication link with the community. A curriculum was written for a three-week course and was implemented in two high schools. An evaluation of the program is included in this report. Appended are assessment questionnaires, the curriculum, and a report prepared by the teacher of the program. (JD)

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Gaining Community Acceptance of a Sex Education Program

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the National Ed.D. Program for Educational Leaders, Nova University

Individual Practicum
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ABSTRACT

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TITLE Gaining Community Acceptance of a Sex Education Program

DESCRIPTORS *Sex Education, *Secondary School Students, *Sexuality, *Teaching Methods, *Program Planning, *Curriculum, *Contraception, Values, Attitudes, Interpersonal Relationships

ABSTRACT A study committee representative of students, teachers, and parents of the New Trier Township High Schools in Northfield and Winnetka, Illinois, and of the community at large, was chaired by the author to study, to plan, and to implement a sex education program. The author initiated this action in response to a petition asking the school district for assistance in helping young people deal responsibly with their sexuality. The petition, prepared by a student, was signed by 1500 students, parents, and teachers.

The committee studied what other schools in the Chicago area were doing to meet the sex education needs of their communities, wrote a statement of philosophy and purpose for sex education, reacted to a model for a sex education program prepared by the author, and served as an important communication link with the community.

A curriculum was written for a three week sex information course and was implemented in the two high schools. An evaluation of the program was conducted. A view of the future and other possible applications of this practicum report are presented.

As evidenced by no negative community reaction and by positive testimony from students, parents, and faculty members, the objective of gaining community acceptance of a sex education program was achieved. Further, the Board of Education commended the program and approved its offering for a second year.

The appendix contains assessment questionnaires, the curriculum, and a report prepared by the teacher of the program. In addition, copies of letters sent to the committee and the Superintendent of Schools are included.

This practicum report may be useful to other school districts to consider as a way to achieve change when the desired change affects the beliefs held by many persons. It may be of specific value to school districts that desire to attempt to define and implement a sex information program.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Conflict over whether sex education had a place in the schools made good newspaper copy throughout the United States in the middle and late 1960's. The State of Illinois responded to this conflict by writing a new law to legitimize sex education in the schools of that State. Passed by the 74th General Assembly , the Illinois Sex Education Act was signed by Governor Otto Kerner on August 17, 1965.

This new law established a Division of Sex Education in the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and a nine member Sex Education Advisory Board. The law defined the powers and duties of the Division and the Advisory Board. In addition the Advisory Board was charged with the responsibility of making policy recommendations for the distribution of sex education materials. In 1971, the Illinois Office of Education issued to schools a Policy Statement on Family Life and Sex Education which had been developed by the Advisory Board. The Office of Education made the following observations in the Foreword to the Policy Statement:[1]

> A recent trend in American education has been the concern to develop quality comprehensive programs of education that will help to meet all the needs

1 Illinois Office of Education - Sex Education Advisory Board. Policy Statement on Family Life and Sex Education. Springfield, Illinois: Illinois Office of Education, 1971, p.5.

of youth. Sex education, while not an entirely new area of school responsibility, is receiving an increasing amount of attention.

There is much interest in family life and sex education. This interest is reflected in a variety of ways. For example, the communications media in the past few years have devoted a substantial amount of time and space to this subject. There has been a growing awareness among school and community groups concerning the need for instruction in this important area. Concurrently, there has been much confusion about how schools and communities should best approach this important topic.

The area of sex education and family living presents many challenges to all educators and citizens of local communities. The home, the church, the community, and the schools all have important roles to play if sound programs are to be made available to Illinois youth. Program planning must be a cooperative venture which includes all community agencies and resources.

The United States is not the only country in which there has been a concern about sex education. The New South Wales Government in Australia appointed a committee in 1971, to review policy relating to sex education.[2] A booklet entitled Personal Development in Secondary Schools - The Place of Sex Education, A Statement of Principles was issued by the committee in 1974. This well written publication includes a good discussion of the role of the school in helping young people acquire sexual knowledge and attitudes. The following two paragraphs of this discussion are prescient for what happened in the New Trier High Schools in 1978.[3]

2 New South Wales Government Ministry of Education. Personal Development in Secondary Schools- The Place of Sex Education. New South Wales, Australia: Ministry of Education, April, 1974. p.3.

3 Ibid., p.7.

> Because students need guidance the school must be involved. There are several cogent reasons for this. Sex education is not a separate entity but a vital part of the development of all youngsters. It is difficult to grow up in a society or to accept the credibility of an institution such as the school in which one's important problems are dismissed or regarded as strictly taboo. It is patent that, apart from the parents, the teacher is one to whom the child turns for guidance, advice and support in a whole range of matters including developing sexuality. For the child's sake and the school's sake, this guidance and help should be honestly and readily available.
>
> It can also be said that the secondary school has an advantage in that it can meet the adolescent's needs to discuss development with responsible adults who are not too emotionally involved with him. It is reasonable to say that the development of sex education in the home alone is complicated by the adolescent's emotional involvement in the growth processes and the involvement of his parents in this and all of its ramifications such as the growth of independence and the tendency to rebellion. Sex education is also complicated by the fact that it is necessary for parents offering guidance to have had themselves appropriate education in these matters if the issues are to be well handled. For whatever reasons, it is clear that the youngster must and will turn to the school for help in these matters and help should be forthcoming. Ideally, the home and the school will provide the young with complementary programmes for personal development.

During the first week of April, 1978, Rhonda Alter, a senior at New Trier High School West, circulated a petition asking for more sex education. Rhonda, who had served as a volunteer counselor at LINKS, a youth health clinic in Northfield, Illinois, initiated the petition

because of her frustration with the problem of many pregnant high schools girls coming to the clinic for help. Rhonda concluded her petition, which was signed by more than 1500 persons, by writing:

> With this petition, we hope to illustrate our needs and to create a bonding awareness among the student body. Ultimately we desire to form a liaison between the school and the parents in the community. For without such a sincere effort on all sides, it will then be accurate to say that we are condoning irresponsible sexual activity. Frankly, we feel that making no decision here is in fact making a very stern decision - one that we will solemnly regret in the near future. Our strongest hope of all is that we are not asking for miracles by turning to the two institutions that are most important to our lives. They are respectively, our home and our school..
>
> Don't wait until this problem enters your home; take the proper steps now. Write or contact your school board. Request that a committee consisting of educators, parents, and students be established immediately - a committee that will study the problem and recommend the best possible education system.

The New South Wales committee statement that "the youngster must and will turn to the school for help in these matters and help should be forthcoming"is indeed prescient for this petition. Rhonda Alter turned to her school, and though the New Trier High Schools had resisted earlier encouragements, including the Illinois Sex Education Act, to assume responsibility for sex educating its students, Rhonda Alter's cry for help elicited action. This practicum report is a record of actions taken by the practitioner in response to Rhonda's identification

of a problem that was very real to her and the 1500 persons who signed the petition. The petition is included in appendix A, p.64.

II. PROBLEM

Rhonda Alter's petition attracted the attention of Chicago metropolitan area newspapers and radio reporters. The Chicago Tribune, and the Winnetka Talk, carried articles on the petition. Bill Gordon, a reporter for the Chicago Tribune, described the petition and its antecedents, in the April 12, 1978, issue of the Suburban Trib. The Trib headlined his article, "Urge more sex ed. Give us facts, students ask in petitions." The local Winnetka Talk headlined reporter Karen Mose's article, "Students Seek Better Sex Education." WLS-radio, a popular teen station in Chicago with a broadcasting range of over 200 miles, invited Rhonda to participate in a three hour talk show on sex. Within ten days after Rhonda initiated the petition, the need for sex education had exploded in the New Trier High School community.

Three fortuitous circumstances allowed for discussion forums that yielded immediate positive community reaction to the petition. First, on April 5, the practitioner held a 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. meeting with a representative group of students and parents to discuss findings of the North Central Association's evaluation of New Trier West. However, most of the meeting time was spent discussing the petition, which was presented to the group by Michael Alter,

a junior class student representative. Michael is Rhonda Alter's brother. The parents and students in this meeting offered support of the petition. Second, the New Trier West Faculty Council, a group of teachers elected by their colleagues to serve as a legislative arm of the Teachers' Education Association, invited Rhonda to discuss her petition at the Council's meeting on the afternoon of April 10. The Council registered its support of the petition. And third, the New Trier Township High School District Board of Education had scheduled an informational meeting with representatives of LINKS, the youth health service organization Rhonda served, to be held before the regular Board meeting on April 10. Most of the session with LINKS and the Board centered on issues raised by the petition.

By good luck, representative students, parents, and faculty members had registered support for the petition within 10 days after its circulation. The Board of Education, during its regular meeting on April 10, received a report on the petition from the New Trier High Schools Superintendent, Dr. Roderick Bickert. Also, the Board received a proposal from the practitioner to initiate action to solve the problem. The Board accepted the practitioner's practicum proposal and expressed its support for the problem of defining and gaining community acceptance of a sex education program.

III. TERMINAL OBJECTIVE

The objective of this practicum was to gain community acceptance of a sex education program. To determine how successfully the objective was achieved, the practitioner set forth the following criteria for measuring community acceptance:

1. No more than twenty-five citizens would register complaints about the implementation of a sex education program.
2. Students, faculty members, and parents would offer positive testimony about the value of the program.
3. The program would be approved by the Board of Education for a second year of operation.

Gaining community acceptance of a new program in the schools that people may perceive as affecting their beliefs in some way, requires careful attention to the manner in which that program is defined and implemented. The strategy used and the process and product objectives that are developed and accomplished in response to the strategy are critical factors in bringing about change while minimizing conflict.

IV. STRATEGY

Some people feel sex education has no place in the schools. These people argue that sex education is un-American. The American way of life, they say, places responsibility for sex education with the family. Each

family holds beliefs about sex that are related to the family's religious affiliation. Since the United States Constitution mandates separation of Church and State, they argue, sex education is unconstitutional and therefore un-American.

However, most people will say there has been a general breakdown of traditional beliefs; beliefs that minimized pre-marital sex and consequent unwanted pregnancies. Therefore, these people argue, witness the number of persons who signed Rhonda Alter's petition, the schools should provide sex education so that young people can make intelligent choices. They argue that people should know enough about themselves and their sexuality so they can protect themselves by choosing to abstain from sexual intercourse or to know how to use methods of contraception. They turn to the institution charged with providing them with a basic education for help -- their high schools.

The question of how best high schools can help students with their sex education must be answered in the milieu of conflicting views about what schools should or should not do and what are effective sex education programs.

Kirkendall and Tritsch define three possible approaches for answering this question.[4] They state:

> The first (approach) is for educators to ignore the need for the public schools to establish or expand programs of education for human sexuality.

[4] Kirkendall, Lester; Tritsch, Len. "Educational Implications of the Dade County Imbroglio." Phi Delta Kappan. October, 1977. pp. 94 and 95.

> ... The second approach typifies the situation in a number of public schools: Continue a minimal program designed mainly to pass along information about reproductive processes and physical maturation. ... The third approach recognizes that since sexuality is an integral part of the human condition, it should not be studied in a vacuum. The most effective approach envisions a human relations instructional core with materials incorporated through various grade levels.

These authors argue that the third approach is the best way to answer the question, but that "leadership quality of a high order" is necessary to achieve success.[5]

Peter Collins agrees with Kirkendall's and Tritsch's third approach. Collins believes that "a distinct course in sex education is not only unnecessary, but quite out of place, in the high school."[6] Collins adds, however, that "... we can not overlook the necessity for teaching the meaning of human sexuality in the context of the totality of human being and living - we must become engaged in sound sex education, not the superficial dissemination of sex information."[7]

On the other hand, Richard Needle advocates implementing sex education programs in the schools. He states, "Sex education programs that provide the opportunity to study

5. Ibid., p. 95

6. Collins, Peter M. "Sex Education in the Secondary Curriculum: Problems and Psuedo-Problems: "School and Society, October, 1971. p. 358.

7. Ibid., p. 96.

and discuss feelings about sexuality should be made available during the junior high school years ...."[8]

But others are skeptical about the effectiveness or relevance of most sex education programs. Adele Hofmann believes,"It is unlikely that they (adolescents) will be helped by present methods of sex education, which provide only part of the truth and little opportunity for students to test out their own views, explore options, make reasoned choices, and behave responsibly out of their own inner motivations."[9] Peter Scales argues, "Our sex education needs to expose and work toward eliminating destructive sex roles."[10] George Cvetkovich, and others, suggest three practical steps to improve sex-related instruction.[11] They recommend extensive use of classroom discussion so that sex education might be more personal and the use of cross-aged tutors to increase credibility of information shared in disucssions. Thirdly, they recommend that more than technical information about contraceptives be shared with students. They suggest exploring feelings prospective users have about different kinds of contraceptives.

8. Needle, Richard H. "Factors Affecting Contraceptive Practices of High School and College-Age Students." The Journal of School Health. June, 1971. p. 340.

9. Hofmann, Adele D. "Adolescents, Sex, and Education." New York University Education Quarterly. Vol. 8. No.4. Summer, 1977. p.7.

10. Scales, Peter. "How We Guarantee the Ineffectiveness of Sex Education." SIECUS Report. March, 1978,p.2.

11. Cvetkovich, George; and others. "On the Psychology of Adolescents' Use of Contraceptives." The Journal of Sex Research, August, 1975, pp. 267 and 268.

The literature on sex education does not reveal any consensus of what is the best kind of sex education program or a fail-safe means of implementing a program. Although a considerable number of studies have been conducted by researchers, there is no definite answer to the question of how best schools can help students with their sex education. Discovering that there was no answer to this question in 1971, the Illinois Office of Education held that "Program planning (for sex education) must be a cooperative venture which includes all community agencies and resources."[12]

It would have been foolhardy for the practitioner to assume education about sex to be solely a "professional" problem that should be dealt with only by teachers. The potential for second guessing by and conflict with those who believe sex education to be un-American would have been too great. A community consensus of sorts on what should be taught, when, where, and by whom needed to be obtained to obviate the possibility of"the community going up in smoke." Moreover, if only teachers were involved in addressing the question, a solution requiring use only of the schools' resources of personnel, time, and money would likely be attacked for not using community wide resources.

To avoid these potential problems, the practitioner, taking the advice that program planning be a joint venture, established a study committee representative of students,

12. Op. Cit., Illinois Office of Education, p.5.

teachers, parents, and various community organizations to accomplish the following tasks:

1. Determine what had been done in communities similar to ours to address the need of sex education.
2. Write a philosophy of sex education.
3. Determine what general learning goals should be achieved in a sex education program.
4. Agree on who should do what, when, where, how, and with what resources to define, implement, and evaluate a sex education program.

The practitioner conferred with his colleague principal at New Trier High School East, Mr. Ralph G. McGee, about who should serve on the study committee to obtain community wide participation. McGee and the practitioner decided the committee should include representatives of the following groups:

1. Two students from New Trier High School West.
2. Two students from New Trier High School East.
3. Two faculty members from New Trier High School West.
4. Two faculty members from New Trier High School East.
5. Two parents from New Trier High School West.
6. Two parents from New Trier High School East.
7. Two faculty members from two of the six elementary school districts that send students to the New Trier High Schools.
8. One minister from one of the area churches.
9. One rabbi from one of the area synagogues.

10. One representative from the North Shore Mental Health Association.

11. One representative from LINKS.

12. One representative from Right-To-Life.

13. One person who represents the New Trier Township community in a general sense.

In preparation for his work with the committee, the practitioner developed a model of what a sex education program in the New Trier High Schools might include and a set of specific process and product objectives that would have to be accomplished to define and implement the program.

Model

To meet the needs for sex education in a school system wherein there is very little time, space, or financial resources to add new course offerings, the practitioner described the following elements as requisite for a sex education program in the New Trier schools:

1. A statement of philosophy and goals agreed to by the committee.

2. A course of study listing the specific learning objectives and activities that would lead to fulfillment of the philosophy and goals statement. The course of study should take no longer than ten forty minute teaching periods to complete.

   Note: Mr. McGee and the practitioner knew they could allocate some of the student and teacher

time normally given to physical education to a sex education program. At its April 10, 1978, meeting, the New Trier High Schools' Board of Education acted to reinstitute the requirement that eight semesters of physical education be taken by each student. This action followed a year in which state guidelines permitted the Board to substitute one semester of driver education. This permission was rescinded for the 1978-79 school year. In reinstituting the eight semester requirement, the Board stipulated that some time could be used for health/sex education purposes in physical education classes.

3. A set of implementation guidelines that would include the following: a. The school will provide space and time during the school day. b. Members of each school's faculty will provide coordination of space, time, learners, and outside volunteer "teachers." c. The "teachers" will be persons recognized in the community for their expertise on whatever learning objectives they are to help the learners achieve. d. Students will not be graded. e. Students whose parents object to their participation will be excused.

Further, the practitioner formulated the following process and product objectives for developing and implementing a sex education program.

V. PROCESS AND PRODUCT OBJECTIVES

1. By April 26, 1978, members of the committee will be chosen. The New Trier East High School principal will be responsible for choosing representatives from the East school. The superintendents of the feeder elementary school districts will be responsible for choosing representatives of their districts. The practitioner will be responsible for choosing the remaining representatives.
2. By May 10, 1978, the practitioner will convene the first meeting of the study committee. This meeting will be held between the hours of 7:30 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. The following outcomes will be achieved: a. Committee members will understand the need for a sex education program. b. Committee members will understand the practitioner's view of what elements a sex education program in the New Trier High Schools should include. c. Committee members will volunteer to serve on one of two subcommittees -- a subcommittee charged with the responsibility of developing a draft of a philosophy and goals statement, or a subcommittee charged with the responsibility of determining what has been done in communities similar to ours to address the need for sex education. d. The practitioner will share the results of an ERIC search to give members of the subcommittees help with their assignments.

In addition, the practitioner will share several courses of study for sex education that have been prepared by school districts in the Chicago area.

3. By May 30, 1978, the practitioner will convene the second meeting of the study committee. The following outcomes will be achieved: a. The committee will agree on a statement of philosophy and goals. b. The committee will decide if the practitioner's model of a sex education program makes good sense in the light of the findings of the subcommittees. The model will be confirmed or remodeled.
4. By August 1, 1978, a group of faculty members, and other committee members who may be able to participate, will develop a curriculum. Two to four faculty members will be paid $250 per week for up to four weeks to prepare the course of study.
5. By September 15, 1978, the course of study will be implemented by two teachers with pilot groups of students enrolled in physical education classes at New Trier West and New Trier East.
6. By October 15, 1978, the course of study will be revised by faculty members in response to findings about the pilot groups' experiences.
7. By December 15, 1978, at least 400 students enrolled in physical education classes in the two schools will have experienced the revised course of study.

8. By January 15, 1979, the course of study will have undergone a second revision by faculty members in response to findings about the students' and"teachers" experiences with the first revision.
9. By February 1, 1979, the second revision will be implemented in the schools.

VI. ACCOMPLISHING THE OBJECTIVES

Study Committee Formed

Mr. McGee and Mr. Cox, principals of the two high schools, agreed that the committee members would be selected in the following manner:

1. McGee would select an eleventh-grade girl and a sophomore boy. Cox would select a twelfth-grade girl and an eleventh-grade boy. These selections would insure continuity of student representation into the next school year.
2. McGee would select a Girls Physical Education teacher and a teacher who had taught a course in Human Behavior. Cox would select a teacher from the Social Work Department and one from the Science Department. These selections would provide representation of teachers most knowledgeable of and interested in sex education.
3. McGee and Cox would ask their respective Parents Associations to appoint two parents from each association.

4. Cox would confer with Superintendent Bickert to determine which two elementary districts should be invited to send representatives.
5. Cox would select the remaining committee members; a minister, a rabbi, a respresentative of the mental health association, a representative of LINKS, a representative of the Right-To-Life organization, and a representative of the community in general.

In accordance with the agreement above, the following persons were selected to serve on the study committee:

1. Mrs. Claire Agger, teacher of biology and psychology at New Trier West.
2. Michael Alter, eleventh-grade student at New Trier West. Michael is a good student, class officer, and popular athlete.
3. Rhonda Alter, twelfth-grade student at New Trier West. Rhonda authored the petition asking for the formation of a committee to study sex education.
4. Ms. Bonnie Beach, teacher of physical education and adviser at New Trier East.
5. Mrs. Linda Blumberg, Director of Education of the North Shore Mental Health Association.
6. Mrs. Georgia Carson, New Trier West parent and past president of the North Shore Mental Health Association.

7. James Connors, tenth-grade student at New Trier East. James is a good student, is active in student government, and is a popular athlete.
8. Mr. David Flahive, teacher at Central Junior High School in Glencoe, Illinois. Dr. Charles Young, superintendent of the Glencoe Elementary School District recommended Mr. Flahive on the basis of his experience in teaching sex education courses in the junior high schools.
9. Kristin Hayes, eleventh-grade student at New Trier East. Kristin is a good student, a student leader, and a popular performer in drama and musical productions.
10. Mr. Wayne Koch, assistant principal at Howard Junior High School in Wilmette, Illinois. Mr. Larry Love, superintendent of the Wilmette Elementary School District recommended Mr. Koch on the basis of his experience in teaching science and in administering school programs.
11. Reverend Arthur Nelson, Minister of the Winnetka Covenant Church. Reverend Nelson's large congregation is drawn from all parts of the New Trier Township. He is the father of two New Trier West students.
12. Mr. Chuck Provow, teacher of Human Behavior at New Trier East.

13. Mrs. Carol Rossiter, New Trier East parent and an officer of the East Parents Association.

14. Rabbi Robert Schreibman, Rabbi of Temple Jeremiah in Northfield, Illinois. Rabbi Schreibman's large congregation is drawn from all parts of the New Trier Township. He is the father of two New Trier West students.

15. Mr. Kay Schultz, Editor of the Wilmette Life newspaper. As editor of this large community newspaper, Mr. Schultz has his finger of the pulse of the community. He is the father of a New Trier East student.

16. Mr. William Tangney, New Trier East parent of five children and an officer of the East Parents Association.

17. Mr. Ben Wheatley, social worker at New Trier West. Mr. Wheatley has attended numerous conferences and workshops on sex education. He has taught courses in Human Behavior and Psychology at New Trier West.

18. Ms. Myrna Janus, teacher of science and sex education at Washburne Junior High School in Winnetka, Illinois. Ms. Janus volunteered to serve on the study committee.

The practitioner attempted to obtain a representative of the Right-To-Life group. The priest of a local Catholic church would have been his choice. However, the priest was

very concerned about the development of an even more permissive society, and, in particular, felt sex education was a root cause of permissiveness. He felt sex education was un-American and was convinced that the people responsible for the establishment of the youth health organization, LINKS, were conspiring to introduce sex education into the schools. In the light of complete failure to change this priest's attitudes about the committee, the practitioner decided not to invite persons representative of Right-To-Life or of LINKS.

On April 26, 1978, the practitioner sent a letter to members of the study committee inviting them to attend the inaugural meeting on Tuesday night, May 9, 1978. The letter identified the expected outcomes of the meeting and asked members to mark their calendars for the second meeting, tentatively scheduled for May 23, 1978. This letter is included in appendix B , p.68.

Study Committee Organized for Work

The practitioner convened the first meeting of the study committee at 7:40 p.m. on May 9, 1978. All members were present except Mrs. Rossiter who had to be out of town. After allowing several minutes for people to introduce themselves, the practitioner reviewed the purpose of the study committee and the intended outcomes of the first meeting.

Subsequently, the practitioner reviewed the contents of the Alter petition and asked Rhonda to share her thoughts

and feelings with the group. Committee member Tangney heaped praise on Rhonda for bringing the problem of teen age pregnancies to the attention of the community. Mr. Tangney revealed that he and his family had cared for many pregnant girls on a foster child basis over the past several years. He expressed considerable enthusiasm for the notion that the schools might help obviate the human tragedies he had witnessed in his family's experiences of caring for pregnant teens. Committee members Sachs; Carson, Schreibman, and Nelson praised Rhonda for her courage and resourcefulness in initiating the petition. Within a few minutes after Rhonda had talked, all members of the committee had stated that they felt the need for sex education was very real and that the schools ought to be able to help fill the need.

The practitioner told committee members of his belief that the number of unwanted teen age pregnancies could be reduced by implementing a sex education program that would enable teens to understand and deal intellignently with their sexuality and sexual expression. Further, on the basis of their comments, he said he felt committee members shared that belief. The practitioner told committee members he would move the agenda by sharing his model for a sex education program with them and by outlining the process and product objectives that would have to be accomplished to implement a program next school year. He emphasized

with the committee that the model and the objectives were being presented for the purpose of providing focus and direction to the work of the committee, not as the solution to the problem.

After hearing the practitioner, members of the committee discussed some of the advantages and disadvantages of the model. Several members were especially concerned about the notions that a program could be taught by persons outside of the school and could be completed within ten school days. The entire committee was very concerned about being able to maintain continuity in a program and insure quality control if presenters would change over at a rapid rate. Few volunteers, committee members emphasized, would be able to make a commitment to the school of ten full working days. Further they asked, how can you know that some presenter would not make some outrageous statement that would "blow the program out of the water?"

The practitioner assured committee members their concerns were important to him and for the deliberation of the committee, and that those concerns would be addressed in the light of their philosophy and goals statement and their findings about what other schools are doing about sex education. Feeling comfortable that committee members understood his model for a sex education program, the practitioner moved the agenda by suggesting the remaining meeting time be spent organizing for accomplishing the subcommittee tasks of writing a philosophy statement and of determining

what other communities were doing to address the need for sex education. The practitioner asked that the subcommittees present their work to the whole committee at the next meeting scheduled for May 23, 1978.

After the practitioner arbitrarily divided the group into two subcommittees, each of which included representatives of students, parents, and faculty, the philosophy subcommittee convened at one end of the room under the leadership of Mr. Wheatley while the other subcommittee convened at the opposite end of the room under the leadership of Mr. Provow. Wheatley and Provow had accepted the practitioner's invitation to chair these subcommittees prior to the meeting. In addition, the practitioner had provided them with copies of sex education curriculum guides from several school districts in the Chicago metropolitan area and copies of an ERIC search print-out on sex education prepared by Nova University.

Wheatley's subcommittee members agreed to meet at committee member Sach's home on the morning of Wednesday, May 17, from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. The practitioner arranged to pay substitute teachers so that the teacher members could attend. The following persons served on this subcommittee: Rhonda Alter, Ms. Beach, Mrs. Blumberg, Mr. Flahive, Mrs. Rossiter, Mrs. Sachs, Rabbi Schreibman, and Mr. Schultz.

Provow's subcommittee members, Mrs. Agger, Michael

Alter, Mrs. Carson, James Connors, Kristin Hayes, Mr. Koch, Reverend Nelson, and Mr. Tangney, agreed to distribute the curriculum guides among its members so that a report on each guide could be given by a member of the subcommittee on May 23. Further, it was agreed that the six feeder junior high schools would be contacted by members of the subcommittee. Six members were each given a specific junior high contact assignment. Mr. Provow agreed to review the ERIC print-out and to inform the practitioner which items should be obtained.

Study Committee Work Reported

The practitioner convened the committee for its second meeting on May 23, 1978, at 7:30 p.m. for the purposes of obtaining agreement on a statement of philosophy and goals and of determining whether the practitioner's model of a sex education program made good sense in the light of the work done by the two subcommittees.

The practitioner asked Mr. Wheatley to distribute the philosophy and goals statement prepared by his subcommittee. Wheatley had synthesized the wishes and concerns expressed in the Wednesday meeting of his subcommittee. The statement was enthusiastically endorsed by the whole committee. Only three words were changed. The statement, adopted by the committee, is as follows:

> In our complex and rapidly changing society, high school students need to be assisted in their search to define their values, behavior and sense of self. This is particularly true in the area of human sexuality where the continuing education of young

people is often guided more by peer pressure and experimentation than by open questioning and exploration of the motivation for behavior and the meaning of values and morality as they apply to sexuality.

In teaching about human sexuality our goal must be to provide an environment in which students can gain additional knowledge to broaden their understanding of human sexuality and the life-long part it plays in human relationships, be that as peer, companion, spouse or parent. The responsible expression of one's sexuality is paramount in human relationships both to individuals and to the society in which they live. Open discussion of this responsibility, especially for youth, is vital; and an understanding of human physiology and health, human emotional needs, the source and nature of social and moral values, the emotional aspects of inter-personal relationships and the concept of intimacy and love are the foundations upon which personal behavior and moral codes are built in the area of human sexuality. Students who attain a high level of knowledge and self understanding are in the best position to express themselves in ways appropriate to their personal, family and moral values without recourse to impulsive, exploitive and irresponsible behavior towards self or other human beings. Our teaching must be focused toward this end.

Members of Mr. Provow's subcommittee reported on the sex education programs offered in Chicago area high schools. All of the suburban schools offer full semester courses in Health Education which include units of study on sex education. Some of the units include study of the controversial topics of contraception, abortion, and homosexuality. One of the schools teaches a concentrated and comprehensive three week unit on human development and sexuality. The Chicago city school system has a comprehensive K-12 curriculum on Family Life Education which may be used

at the discretion of each school principal.

Provow's subcommittee members further reported their findings in the feeder junior high schools. Half of them have well defined programs. Half of them have no programs.

Following the subcommittee reports, the practitioner announced a 15 minute break which would be followed by a discussion of whether the practitioner's model for a sex education program made good sense. Committee members took advantage of the break time to share thoughts and feelings about their work and the practitioner's model. By the time the practitioner called the meeting back to order, committee members were feeling quite comfortable with one another and their own thoughts.

The practitioner opened the second half of the meeting by reading portions of a thoughtful letter committee member Blumberg sent to him on May 16, 1978:

> After reflecting on the complexities of planning which were raised at the May 9th meeting, I wanted to share some thoughts with you, on behalf of the North Shore Mental Health Association - Irene Josselyn Clinic.
>
> While I understand the financial bind you're in (similar to all of us) I am deeply concerned about using volunteers to staff such a program.
>
> First - A search for qualified professionals in the community who would be willing to participate could be endless and perhaps, fruitless. When you attempt to build a course on volunteer work in an institution that is based on salaried instruction, you immediately relegate the program to the basement in terms of priorities. No highly qualified professional will want to be a part of that.
>
> Additionally, other agencies are also short of funds and cannot survive through sending out volunteers.

> Not only the professionals, but parents and students will also see this course as having very minor importance in the scheme of things if it is run by a volunteer staff.
>
> Many volunteer programs are also unreliable and unstable; in order to keep programs going there is a constant need for training and retraining. People do not necessarily tend to feel committed to such efforts. There can be a very large turnover in staff.
>
> A most crucial component of a meaningful sex education program for adolescents is related to willingness to trust and respond to the person doing the educating. It would be far less complicated, I realize, to plan around turning over a body of information to a group of kids in a limited number of sessions. But I think such an effort, involving a number of people rather than one or two, would only perpetuate exactly the philosophy which should be avoided - that sex and feelings can be separated. A responsible and comprehensive program requires the ongoing participation of one person who can deal with the powerful feelings and questions of adolescents.

This reading elicited considerable support from committee members for Mrs. Blumberg's thoughts. Moreover, the committee was equally concerned with the short amount of course time that the practitioner had proposed in his model. Surely, most members said, Mrs. Blumberg's concerns could not be attended to in ten, forty minute periods. However, two members of the committee argued that use of volunteers did not necessarily automatically relegate a program to a low priority profile. Nevertheless, the practitioner received the message loud and clear from the committee that his model for a sex education program needed major revision.

The questions of who should teach, when, and where had been discussed thoughtfully. The question of what should

be taught needed further illumination. The practitioner asked committee members to focus on that important question. After struggling with it (the strained silence was deafening) for over fifteen minutes, Mr. Wheatley suggested we find out what students know and what they think should be taught. In the light of the fact that many students have had some sex education in junior high school, perhaps the general level of knowledge of all students is such that only an abbreviated course would be necessary. The committee agreed.

The practitioner closed the meeting with the following comments and commitments:

1. A sampling of second semester freshman students in the two schools would be surveyed to find out their general level of knowledge about sex and what they think would be valuable to include in a sex education program.
2. In the light of the results of the questionnaire and the thoughts and feelings of the committtee, the practitioner would revise his model for a sex education program.
3. The practitioner would send to committee members the results of the survey and a description of the new model.
4. Two to four faculty members would work during the summer under the auspices of a financial grant from the Board of Education to write a curriculum.

5. The practitioner would send copies of the curriculum to members of the committee for their comments and reactions before recommending it to the Superintendent.

Student Knowledge and Opinion Surveyed

Mr. Ben Wheatley volunteered to draft several items that could be used to assess students' knowledge of and attitudes toward sexual matters, and to determine what students think would be important to include in a sex education program at New Trier. On May 30, Wheatley and the practitioner met for the purpose of deciding which items would be used in a questionnaire. Thirty-two short-answer items on knowledge and attitues and eight topics for ranking in order of importance in a sex education program were selected.

By June 2, the practitioner had prepared the questionnaire, included in appendix C, p 70, arranged for the answer cards to be scored by the New Trier West mathematics department on its mini-computer, and arranged for the questionnaire to be administered in four freshman adviser rooms. (The counseling system in the New Trier schools consists of a collection of adviser groups numbering 30 to 32 each. Each adviser room consists of a mix of girls or boys who are representative of the villages served by the schools and who are representative of the abilities,

talents, and interests within each class population. As a result, the set of students within an adviser room may be considered a random sampling of the general class population.)

The practitioner sent questionnaires to a boys' and a girls' adviser group in each school. The faculty adviser of each group distributed the questionnaires to the students and allowed them to use the 25 minute adviser period on June 13 to respond to the items.

Mr. Wheatley analyzed the responses to the questionnaire. In his summary of the results, Wheatley reported the following for items 3 through 10 having to do with attitudes and opinions:

> Answers of opinion tended to be conservative, with minor differences between East and West, boys and girls. A profile suggests that males or females should "have sex" only when they feel it is right. An unmarried girl who becomes pregnant should have her baby and place it for adoption. Abortion would be considered if pregnancy is the result of rape. Any one over the age of 18 should be able to get contraceptives from a clinic or doctor. Homo-sexuality is viewed with ambivalence: it is either normal for either sex or not normal for both. And the primary fear a student has about going to a doctor for treatment of VD is that "He might tell the parents."

For items 11 through 32 having to do with knowledge, he reported:

> Four questions were missed by more than one half of the students in both schools and by both sexes and by those "with and without sex-ed." In addition, those without sex education missed four questions dealing with sexual myths (penis size, being in love, early maturing girls, and birth control information encouraging sexual activity).

On the ranking of topics, he summarized:

> Regarding the eight areas of study to be ranked in order of importance, factual information takes precedence over stereotypes, attitudes, and values. The students answering the survey may want to talk about the latter items, but not until contraception, VD, reproduction, and their questions are addressed.

Mr. Wheatley's complete report is included in appendix D, p. 75.

Program Developed

In response to the study committee's work, the practitioner revised the two-week/volunteer idea for a sex education program to the following model:

1. Sophomores will participate in a sex information program for three weeks. The time will come from the physical education program. One six week physical education unit during the sophomore year will include three weeks of student enrollment in a sex information class.
2. One full-time teacher will be hired by the New Trier High School District to teach the sex information classes at both high scools. This teacher will coordinate and monitor use of learning resources, including the use of available community resources.

This revision was made in consultation with Superintendent Bickert, Associate Superintendent Patzwald, and New Trier East Principal McGee. These three men and the practitioner were not entirely comfortable with this

new model because it demanded the use of scarce district resources. However, the group felt the Board of Education would respond favorably to a request to fund what had become an important high priority program need in the district. This feeling was especially reinforced by Board member Mrs. Joan Levy who had attended meetings of the study committee.

Mr. Ben Wheatley and Mrs. Claire Agger, two faculty members of the study committee, contracted to work for three weeks (under the auspices of a Board grant) in July and August to develop a curriculum for a three-week, teacher-taught sex information program. They agreed to develop a program that would be responsive to the statement of philosophy, to the students' needs as revealed by the results of the questionnaire, and to research findings on sex education programs.

On July 10, 1978, the practitioner sent a letter to members of the study committee wherein he included the following:

1. A copy of the questionnaire and a copy of the analysis of the students' responses to the questionnaire.
2. A description of the new model.
3. A time table for completing program development:
   a. Send the curriculum developed by Wheatley and Agger to members of the study committee for

their perusal and response by August 15, 1978.

b. Send the curriculum, the committee members' responses, and a proposal to Superintendent Bickert by September 1, 1978.

c. Request that the Board of Education act on the proposal submitted by Dr. Bickert at its regular meeting scheduled for September 18, 1978.

4. A request that committee members inform the practitioner of any reactions they might have to the information provided in the letter. A copy of the letter is included in appendix E , p.81.

Though no committee member responded to the July 10 letter, Dr. Mary Giffin, Medical Director of the Irene Josselyn Clinic and supervisor of committee member Blumberg, wrote, " I was especially pleased to see [in the practitioner's letter to Blumberg] that you are going to be depending on a full-time teacher hired by the School District. I feel confident that this reflection of responsibility and belief in the program will enhance the level of the content."

Wheatley and Agger, two extraordinarily competent persons, completed the prodigious task of writing a sex information curriculum by August 1. The curriculum is included in appendix F ,p.84.

The practitioner mailed copies of the curriculum to study committee members on August 4 with the request that they send to him their reactions and suggestions by August 23. A copy of the cover letter is included in appendix G, p. 126.

Committee members were unanimous in their praise of the excellent work done by Agger and Wheatley. Committee member Blumberg's comments were typical of those made by the committee. She wrote:

> As I reviewed the very impressive sex information program you sent, I recalled the first meeting I attended to plan this program. It was a very small acorn which locks as if it may grow into a very large tree.
>
> The program certainly seems responsive to the needs expressed both in the original petition and the questionnaire. It more than meets the philosophic framework that was evolved by that committee. If I have any critical thoughts, they are only that this is a very ambitious program for three weeks. However, I couldn't think of anything to omit. I suspect you will want to lengthen the course time, but experience will reveal that as the course progresses.
>
> We will be interested to hear about responses to the program as it develops in the coming years. I hope there will not be discouragement if there are no tangible, statistical results. So much of what is learned is stored away for later use. I know how difficult it is for teachers and school boards to trust that the results of any program will be valuable later; we all yearn for immediate results. I am an optimist with a belief that this kind of program, administered by caring and trained instructors, can benefit future as well as current generations.

On September 1, 1978, the practitioner sent a copy of the curriculum, a recommendation for adoption of the sex information program, and a recommendation to hire a full-time teacher for the program to Superintendent Bickert and Associate Superintendent Patzwald. A copy of the memorandum is included in appendix H, p. 128.

Dr. Bickert transmitted the practitioner's memorandum to the Board of Education along with his recommendation

as Superintendent that the program and personnel recommendations be approved. At its meeting on September 18, the Board of Education approved the recommendations and commended all the persons who had been involved in developing the program for their good work.

Program Implemented

The practitioner's original plan called for implementation by September 15 of a course of study by two teachers with pilot groups of students enrolled in physical education at New Trier West and New Trier East. Since the Board did not receive a proposal for action until September 18, the practitioner revised the plan by defining new time-line objectives to take the place of objectives five through nine listed on page 13. They are as follows:

1. By October 15, 1978, a person will be hired to teach the sex information program in the New Trier High Schools.
2. By October 30, 1978, the sex information program teacher will have begun teaching the course at New Trier West.
3. By January 15, 1979, the study committee will have met to come to a judgment of whether the philosophy and goals statement should be revised in the light of information gained from approximately 400 students having completed the course.
4. By February 1, 1979, the course will have been implemented at New Trier East.

Hiring a Teacher: Three persons had contacted the practitioner over the summer months to say that they had read about the sex information study in the newspaper and wanted to go on record as being interested in a job at New Trier. The Director of Personnel for the school district, Mr. Thomas Timmis, informed colleges and universities in Illinois and Indiana in mid-August that New Trier might have a teaching position in sex education available in the Fall. By September 1, the school district had the names of six qualified candidates to invite in for an interview. By September 19, these candidates were interviewed by campus administrators at both New Trier East and New Trier West and by Mr. Timmis. The unanimous choice of the interviewers for the position was Mrs. Mary Gynn, one of the persons who had contacted the practitioner over the summer.

Mrs. Gynn, a resident of the community, has three children enrolled at New Trier East. She is a registered nurse. After seeing her children through their formative years, she went back to school and earned a Master's degree in Health Education at George Williams College. In addition she had taken several courses in psychology and philosophy at Northwestern University and Barat College. She did her practice teaching in sex education at Maine East High School, a Chicago suburban school similar to New Trier, and had served as a substitute science

teacher at the Saints Faith, Hope and Charity school in Winnetka, Illinois (a Catholic school whose graduates attend the New Trier High Schools).

The Board of Education approved Mrs. Gynn's appointment at its regularly scheduled meeting on October 16, 1978.

Implementing the Program at New Trier West: Mrs. Gynn reported to New Trier West for her first day of work on October 17. School had been in session since the day after Labor day. As a result, the physical education departments were well along in teaching their regular curriculum and there would not be an appropriate time to introduce new units of study until October 30. Consequently, Mrs. Gynn had two weeks to work with the school administration, Mrs. Agger, Mr. Wheatley, and physical education teachers to prepare to implement the program.

The practitioner, in consultation with Mrs. Gynn, Mrs. Ann Albert, Assistant Principal for Instruction, Ms. Frances Camp, Chairman of the Girls Physical Education Department, and Mr. Walter Gart, Chairman of the Boys Physical Education Department, established the following guidelines for implementing the program:

1. For administrative purposes, Mrs. Gynn would be responsible to Ms. Camp.
2. Mrs. Gynn would have a desk in the girls physical education department office.
3. Mrs. Gynn would teach four classes per day instead

of the usual five or six. This class load would allow her time to reflect on what was happening in the course and to make changes in the curriculum as the need might arise.

4. Physical education teachers would attend class sessions for the purpose of taking attendance and assisting Mrs. Gynn in any way she might deem necessary and for the purpose of learning how to teach the course so that they might become sex information teachers in the future. (The New Trier District will be reducing its teaching staff by 75-85 persons over the next four years in response to declining enrollment. Survival of the sex information program could depend on the ability of teachers senior in service to teach the course.)
5. Whatever needs Mrs. Gynn might have for supplies and equipment should be transmitted to Mrs. Albert who would use campus contingency funds to buy what was needed.
6. Physical education teachers would inform the students scheduled to take the sex information course that if their parents objected to their enrollment, they should bring a note from them requesting non-participation.

On October 30, 1978, Mrs. Gynn met her first sex information classes. The program was launched! (Only one

parent requested that his child be excused from participating.)

Keeping the Committee Informed: The practitioner sent a letter to members of the study committee on October 19, 1978, to tell them about actions taken by the Board of Education, to inform them of Mrs. Gynn's qualifications, to let them know when classes in the course would begin, and to apprise them that the next meeting would be scheduled in early January. A copy of this letter is included in appendix I, p. 131.

Keeping the Community Informed: Much to the practitioner's surprise and delight, not a single person contacted the school or members of the study committee to protest sex education in the schools. A mild criticism appeared in a letter to the editor of the local newspaper from a citizen who felt the schools' scarce resources should not be siphoned off to support another program that would not be necessary if parents and organized religion did their jobs. Perhaps the extensive coverage by the local press of the petition and the formation of the study committee provided the information required for people to understand and accept the need for sex education.

In addition the community was kept up-to-date on what was happening through articles published in the New Trier West and New Trier East Parents Associations newsletters and through articles published in the student newspapers.

These articles were positive in tone and complimentary of the administration and Board for addressing an important problem. The articles included descriptions of the curriculum developed, of actions taken by the Board, of the qualifications of Mrs. Gynn, and how the course would be implemented in the two schools.

The practitioner did not have to organize any special means of informing the community about the progress of sex education in the schools. Reporters and community organizations kept themselves up-to-date. Mr. Wheatley was invited to speak to several church and community service groups. Mrs. Gynn, Mr. Wheatley, and the practitioner were invited to speak before the Central Council of the New Trier West Parents Association. (The Central Council consists of over 60 parents representing the adviser groups in the four classes.) And, most importantly, the study committee members provided direct communications through their memberships in nearly every social and service organization in the school district.

Philosophy and Goals Statement Reviewed: On December 22, 1978, the practitioner sent a letter to members of the study committee inviting them to meet on January 16, 1979, to determine whether the philosophy and goals statement should be revised in the light of the school's experiences with the first groups of students who had taken the course. In addition to inviting committee members, the practitioner invited Mrs. Marilyn Olander, Assistant Principal for

Instruction at New Trier East, Ms. Lee Kennicke, Chairman of the Girls Physical Education Department at New Trier East, and Mr. Richard Baldrini, Chairman of the Boys Physical Education Department at New Trier East, to attend since they would be implementing the course in their school second semester.

The practitioner canceled the January 16 meeting because of a disastrous snow storm. The meeting was rescheduled for February 13.

On February 13 the study committee met. Ms. Kennicke and Mrs. Olander attended. The agenda was adjusted to include a report from Mr. Wheatley who, at the practitioner's request, had interviewed 33 randomly selected students who had completed the sex information program. These interviews were conducted for the purpose of determing what outcomes had been achieved from the students' point of view.

The practitioner opened the meeting with an introduction of Mrs. Gynn, and the report she was to give. At the practitioner's request, Mrs. Gynn, in early January, had recorded on a dictaphone a description of her experiences in teaching the sex information course. In addition, she described her thoughts and feelings about the course and provided anecdotal comments from students about it. The practitioner's secretary transcribed the tapes. Mrs. Gynn used the transcript as the basis of her report to the study committee. A copy of the transcript is included in

appendix J, p. 133. (In her report Mrs. Gynn praised the library staff at New Trier West for the excellent bibliography they put together of resources available in the library. A copy of this bibliography is included in appendix K, p.165.)

Mr. Wheatley reported some of the results of his interviews with students. He emphasized the following questions/statements he posed in his interviews that elicited positive responses:

1. The course helped me understand my own sexuality.
2. My attitudes and values towards other person's sexual behavior have become more critical and judgmental.
3. The material covered will influence me personally towards more responsible sexual behavior.
4. My attitudes and values toward my own sexual behavior have become more critical and judgmental.
5. Do you think you think you understand any better now what you become involved in when you decide to have sexual relationships?
6. Do you have any clearer understanding of how the opposite sex feels about sexual relationships?

Wheatley's study is discussed further in the evaluation section of this practicum report.

Committee members were delighted with the comments made by Mrs. Gynn and Mr. Wheatley. The members

unanimously agreed that the philosophy and goals statement had withstood the test of practice. The statement, they claimed, should not be changed in any way! Further, Mrs. Olander, Assistant Principal for Instruction at New Trier East, expressed her strong support for the statement and commented very favorably on how the program was going during the two weeks of its operation in her school.

Implementing the Program at New Trier East: The guidelines established for implementing the program at New Trier West were followed in implementing it at New Trier East, with one exception. Since Mrs. Gynn had considerable experience in teaching the program at New Trier West and no longer needed extra time to revise and improve the course, she was assigned six classes per day to teach at New Trier East for the third quarter and five classes per day for the fourth quarter. This class load enabled the department heads to schedule all of the East sophomores into the sex information course during the second semester.

VII. EVALUATION

Terminal Objective

The terminal objective of gaining community acceptance of a sex education program was achieved at a level of success the practitioner found both pleasing and surprising. By February 13, 1979, ten months after Rhonda Alter authored the petition identifying the need for sex education in the

schools, a sex information program had been defined, written, and implemented in both New Trier High Schools. Though a mild criticism of the program appeared in a letter to the editor of the local newspaper, not one single person registered a complaint with the schools.

In addition, faculty members, parents, students, and members of the Board of Education have offered positive testimony that further indicates success in achieving the terminal objective. The physical education teachers, who were present during each class period, acclaimed the program to be excellent. Mr. Walter Gart, Chairman of the Boys Physical Education Department at New Trier West, commented, "I am truly impressed with the program and Mrs. Gynn. Although I have my Master's in Health Education, I know that I could not accomplish what she is with the students. I would feel very uncomfortable trying to duplicate her work and I don't believe any of our physical education teachers could." Ms. Camp, Chairman of the Girls Physical Education Department at New Trier West, was also generous with her praise of the high quality of instruction. Mrs. Ann Albert, Director of Instruction at New Trier West, visited Mrs. Gynn's classes. Mrs. Albert reported the program was going extremely well. Students were actively involved in classes and Mrs. Gynn was doing an outstanding job of dealing with very personal and sensitive topics in a mature, knowledgeable, and humane manner. Students like and respect her.

Members of the study committee praised the program and the apparent excellent work of Mrs. Gynn in teaching a difficult and sensitive subject. The committee saw no need to change its philosophy statement. Parents in general have been very supportive of the program. Only one parent requested that his child not take the course. More direct positive testimony was evidenced in the Parents Association Newsletters and the student newspapers in which articles were published that were positive in tone and complimentary of the administration and Board of Education for defining and implementing a sex education program.

The Board of Education, whose members represent the publics of the New Trier community, commended the persons involved in developing the sex information program and unanimously approved the program, its implementation, and the hiring of a teacher. Further, the Board has approved offering the program a second year.

Another unexpected indicator of community acceptance of the sex information program arose in a very unusual way. The Village of Winnetka, one of the Chicago suburbs served by the New Trier School District, sponsors a youth service agency called the Winnetka Youth Organization (WYO). Ms. Posey Fisher, the director of WYO, wrote an information booklet for high school students entitled, Your Legal Rights and Responsibilities. This booklet, which was written with an "underground information" flavor, includes six chapters. It was published by the Villege of Winnetka in March, 1979. The New Trier High School Board

of Education approved dissemination of the booklet in the high schools during the month of May. Chapter V of the booklet is entitled "How To Do Well on the 'S.A.T.' (Sexual Awareness Test)." This chapter treats briefly the following topics: Human Sexual Development and Reproduction, Birth Control and Contraception, Abortion, Venereal Disease, and attitudes and values.

Distribution of the booklet has triggered a major uproar in the New Trier community. Eight to ten parents, young and old, have appeared before several governing bodies in the Township, including the New Trier High Schools Board of Education, to protest publication and distribution of the booklet. These parents have expressed fear that the "S.A.T." section serves to fracture the family and encourage promiscuity. They challenged the spending of tax money to publish a document that is fundamentally unconstitutional. One mother, expressing considerable emotion and outrage, demanded that the New Trier High Schools Board of Education "burn the books." The conflict generated by these parents has received metropolitan wide press coverage. Radio and television talk shows have featured these parents. A major imbroglio is in the making! The Phil Donaghue show plans to feature parents representing the various points of view on the "S.A.T." in the near future.

The fact that New Trier's Sex Information Program has not come under attack along with the "S.A.T." is a significant indicator that the community has accepted the program. Leaders of the parents opposed to the S.A.T. have met with Mrs.

Gynn to review the print and non-print materials used in the sex information program. As of June, 1979, they have chosen not to attack the program.

In conclusion, the practitioner successfully achieved the terminal objective of gaining community acceptance of a sex education program.

Process and Product Objectives

The process and product objectives were achieved in a completely satisfactory manner. The study committee was formed and functioned as planned. The curriculum was written and approved as planned. The program was successfully implemented in both high schools with a minor adjustment in the original plan; namely, small pilot groups of students were not used to test the curriculum.

To evalute the effectiveness of the primary product, the sex information program, the practitioner asked Mr. Wheatley to conduct interviews with a random sample of students who had completed the sex information program for the purpose of assessing changes in students' values, attitudes, and sexual behavior, and their feelings about the program. Wheatley prepared a set of questions/statements he believed (on the basis of his experience as a psychiatric social worker) would accomplish the purpose. After reviewing these with the practitioner, he settled on twenty items he would present to each student in the sample during an oral interview.

To choose students for interviewing, the practitioner arranged the names of 379 students who had completed the program in alphabetical order, numbered them sequentially, and, using a table of randon numbers, selected 38 names. Wheatley contacted each of these students to arrange a thirty minute appointment in his office. He interviewed 33 of the 38, 15 boys and 18 girls, during a two and one-half week period.

Listed below are the items Wheatley covered with each student:

1. There was information I wanted from this course that I didn't get.
2. The course heleped me understand my own sexuality.
3. My attitudes and values towards other people's sexual behavior have become more critical and judgmental.
4. Since the course, I am more comfortable talking about sexual matters with my parents.
5. The sex of the teacher influenced my level of comfort and learning in the course.
6. The material covered will influence me personally towards more responsible sexual behavior.
7. Since the course I am more comfortable talking about sexual matters with adults.
8. My relationships with the opposite sex have been more open and relaxed in many areas, not just

sexuality, since taking this course.

9. My attitudes and values toward my own sexual behavior have become more critical and judgmental.
10. I am more comfortable since taking this course in talking about sexual matters with boys.
11. I acquired information that I didn't have before.
12. I am more comfortable talking about sexual matters with girls.
13. Do you think you understand any better now what you become involved in when you decide to have sexual relationships?
14. Do you have any clearer understanding of how the opposite sex feels about sexual relationships?
15. What topic was most helpful to you personally?
16. What one part of the course would you eliminate?
17. Would you <u>increase</u> or <u>decrease</u> the number of movies and film strips used in the course?
18. Would you <u>keep in</u> or <u>eliminate</u> the two days of library work?
19. Were you personally comfortable having both sexes in the same class?
20. Would you have liked more discussion and less lecture?

For the first fourteen items, Wheatley numerically ranked each student's response to each item on the following range:

None		Some		A lot
1	2.	3	4	5

He took notes on responses to items fifteen through twenty. The results of the interviews are summarized in Table I on the following page.

TABLE I

Summary of Interviews of 33 Students

Item	Average of Responses; 1 to 5 Range		
	15 Males	18 Females	Males and Females
1	2.47	1.90	2.15
2	2.93	3.16	3.06
3	3.53	2.22	2.82
4	1.40	2.27	1.87
5	1.67	3.00	2.39
6	3.53	3.83	3.69
7	2.01	2.16	2.12
8	2.30	2.67	2.51
9	2.87	3.11	3.00
10	2.60	1.89	2.21
11	3.40	2.33	2.82
12	1.13	2.28	2.06
13	3.93	3.61	3.75
14	3.13	3.11	3.12
15	8 Birth Control 2 None 5 Miscellaneous	12 Birth Control 4 None 2 Miscellaneous	
16	9 None 2 Physiology 2 Question Box	13 None 5 Miscellaneous	
17	5 Increase 3 Decrease 7 No Change	7 Increase 1 Decrease 10 No Change	
18	10 Eliminate 5 Keep	12 Eliminate 6 Keep	
19	15 Yes	18 Yes	
20	12 Yes 3 No	13 Yes 5 No	

Discussion: Items 1 and 11 reveal that the boys apparently possessed less knowledge about sexual matters than did the girls at the beginning of the course. The boys indicate there is some information they wanted from the course that they did not get and indicate they acquired information in the course that they didn't have before. On the

other hand, the girls indicate there wasn't much information they wanted from the course that they didn't get. They also indicate they did not acquire much information that they didn't have before the course.

Responses to items 4, 7, 10, and 12 reveal that the course didn't have much effect on the students so far as their level of comfort is concerned with discussing sexual matters with their friends, parent, or other adults. Boys appear to be somewhat more comfortable talking about sexual matters with other boys as a result of the course.

Item 2 reveals that boys and girls were helped some by the course in understanding their own sexuality.

Item 5 responses reveal that the sex of the teacher helped the girls be more comfortable with the course.

The remaining items, 3, 6, 8, 9, 13, and 14, dealt with values, attitudes, and feelings. Responses to item 3 reveal the interesting fact that the boys' attitudes and values toward other peoples' sexual behavior have become much more critical and judgmental than have the girls'. Item 9 responses reveal the boys apparently became more critical and judgmental of others than they did of themselves. The girls, on the other hand, became much more critical of themselves than of others.

The boys and girls, as revealed by responses to item 8, became more open and relaxed with one another in many areas, not just in the area of sexuality. The girls appear better adjusted in this sense than do the boys.

Responses to items 6, 13, and 14 have an apparent relationship with one another in addition to the fact that the mean values for the responses to these three items were the highest of the collection. Responses to items 13 and 14 reveal better understandings by the students of what they become involved in when they decide to have sexual relationships and of how the opposite sex feels about sexual relationships. These understandings may well underlie their responses to item 6 which indicate that they have been influenced towards more responsible sexual behavior.

Responses to items 15 through 18 reveal general satisfaction with the way the program was presented with the exception of the library work. Two-thirds of the students feel the library work should be eliminated. The responses to item 15 reveal that two-thirds of the students feel "birth control" was the one topic in the course that was most helpful to them personally.

Item 19 responses reveal complete comfort with having both sexes in the same class. This was the only item for which every student responded the same.

The responses to item 20 indicate that three-fourths of students would like more discussion in the class and less lecture.

Mr. Wheatley recorded the following comments made by students in response to his invitation at the close of

each interview to make general comments about the course:

"This should be an optional course because some of us already know the material and other students don't so they act immature."

"I knew most of this from biology and my own experience."

"I wish there had been more discussion."

"We should have had both a male and female instructor to talk about things separately and then together, for instance menstruation with the girls and consideration and self control with the boys."

"There should be more emphasis on how the opposite sex thinks and feels about sexual behavior."

"It would be better for me if I were with my friends and could have signed up. It shouldn't be an assigned course because people are too afraid to talk and there is a lot of discomfort and embarrassment talking in front of strangers."

"The boys seemed immature and shy, maybe the junior year would be better for this because even with menstruation some girls have not yet had their period when they are sophomores."

"The beginning stuff could be eliminated (about the development of feelings) and maybe this should be given in the freshman year."

"This was a useful review of my eighth grade sex education, but it was a good course."

"There should be more discussion. If we had smaller groups it would help."

"Overall I thought it was a good course."

"I think the material was geared to kids younger than sophomores and should be used at the freshman grade."

"It was a good review of the course I had at Marie Murphy Junior High."

"There was not enough discussion and the kids seemed embarrassed."

Notwithstanding the obvious and pleasing success of the plan to study, to write, and to implement a sex education program, the practitioner remains disappointed that one feature of his plan was rejected by the study committee; the idea that schools should be able to fulfill some of the needs of its students by drawing on the resources of the community at large. Schools across the land are experiencing the debilitating effects of inflation and declining enrollment in the midst of rising expectations for quality education. Schools are being encouraged to ameliorate these effects by drawing on the resources of their communities that, ostensibly, are waiting to be tapped. The practitioner's plan of charting a path into those supposed rich resources was severely fractured!

Nevertheless, the community spoke through its Board of Education which approved the use of dollars to support a sex information program, the quality of which has been amply documented.

The excellent work of Wheatley, Agger, and Gynn yielded a high quality program. This is not to say the program needs no further improvement or refining. In her report on the program, see appendix J, p.133, Mrs. Gynn comments several times on the inadequacy of the three week time period to attend to everything she would like to accomplish with the students and to respond adequately to all of their

questions. Mrs. Gynn feels rather strongly that a one semester health education course would be desirable to deal more comprehensively with students' needs. She might be right. Perhaps there are needs to be met for students that are equal in priority with that of sex education.

Side Effects

An important side effect the practitioner hoped for in implementing a sex information program was to reduce the number of unwanted teen age pregnancies.

A comparison of the number of unwanted pregnancies that occurred within the population of students enrolled in the program with the number of unwanted pregnancies that occurred within the same age group the prior year would have provided a measure of this side effect. This measure would have suggested that a decrease, increase, or no change in the rate of unwanted pregnancies is a result of the "treatment," the sex information program.

The problem of determining how many students from a given population become pregnant is one that has prevented anyone from doing a statistically sound study of determining the effectiveness of any educational program in reducing unwanted pregnancies. The practitioner was able to make some progress on this problem by reason of the fact that LINKS, a youth service organization located four blocks from New Trier West, agreed to cooperate in gathering data.

The Executive Director of LINKS, Ms. Jan Venable, agreed to provide the practitioner with information regarding the age, high school attended, and the date of first visit for girls who were pregnant. In addition, LINKS changed their registration forms to include an answer to the question of whether the girls had taken a sex education course in high school.

Though unable to account for students who might deal with pregnancy problems by consulting their private physicians, the practitioner found that LINKS is the agency most other students turn to for help. At the practitioner's request, Mrs. Mary Immenhausen, the New Trier West school nurse, conducted a phone survey of twenty youth service agencies in the Chicago metropolitan area to find out if they were serving New Trier students. She discovered that only six of those agencies had been contacted in 1977 by one or two residents of the New Trier Township. Consequently, the data gathered by LINKS should be consistent from year to year in the sense that the same proportion of pregnant students will turn to LINKS for help each year. Therefore, one may view a change in percentage of New Trier West population reporting to LINKS for help with a pregnancy to be related to the effects of the sex information program.

Mrs. Cindy Woodbury of LINKS provided the practitioner with the data on New Trier West students for the months January through June, 1978 and 1979. However, the data could not be used because of the small sample and because

the girls whose pregnancies were reported post-practicum had not taken the sex information course.

VIII. SIGNIFICANCE

The purpose of this practicum effort was to gain community acceptance of a sex information program in the two New Trier Township High Schools that would enable teens to understand and deal responsibily with ther sexuality and sexual expression.

The fact that the purpose was accomplished is significant. The practicum design was fashioned to minimize conflict. Nevertheless, the practitioner remains amazed by the fact that there was no conflict. It may well be that the anxieties and fears educators have about introducing sex education into the schools are no longer justified. A decade ago parents fought bitterly to keep sex education out of the schools. Is it possible that parents throughout the country may begin to demand that sex education be put in the schools? Probably not. The conflict generated by the "S.A.T." indicates otherwise.

Finding a way to measure the number of unwanted pregnancies occurring in a known population that has received a known "treatment" is significant. Though this practicum effort was not intended to research this problem, a path was charted for the purpose of measuring the number of unwanted pregnancies from a known population that should be exploited by researchers. In the light of

the emphasis and dollars now being given the problem of unwanted teen age pregnancies by the federal government's Department of HEW (HEW refers to the problem as an epidemic), this path may prove to be of special significance.

Finally, this practicum effort was of considerable personal significance to the practitioner for three reasons:

1. The practitioner had the enormous growth experience of planning an education program with a group of lay citizens. This opportunity to lead a group of "laymen" was initially frightening. It evolved into one of the practitioner's most gratifying professional experience.
2 Rhonda Alter's plea for sex education arose from witnessing her friends' shocking and enervating problems. Knowing that a step toward obviating those problems came from this practicum effort is professionally and personally pleasing to the practitioner.
3. The practitioner had the opportunity to work closely with Claire Agger, Mary Gynn, and Ben Wheatley. Without their superior commitment to young people and their excellent work, this practicum effort would not have been possible.

The practitioner is richer professionally and personally as a result of his good fortune in being able to work with these three marvelous persons.

In the field of education, beginnings generate new beginnings rather than endings. The beginning a year ago of this practicum generates new beginnings for the future.

IX. THE FUTURE

The practitioner identifies the following as requiring continued high priority attention in the future:

1. The quality of the program will remain directly related to the quality of the teacher. Mrs. Gynn's position is in jeopardy by reason of the fact that the number of teaching positions in the district is being reduced by releasing teachers according to their seniority within departments. The school administration must continue their efforts to identify and train teachers to teach the sex information program.
2. Mrs. Gynn and members of the study committee have expressed several concerns about the short period of time, three weeks, allotted to teach the course. In addition Mrs. Gynn has expressed

concern about whether all the health education needs of the students are being met as well as they should. Though most of these needs are attended to via guidance modules in adviser rooms, the administration should further evaluate how well the needs are being met so that either the guidance progam might be strengthened or a more comprehensive and separate health education course be considered in the light of good evaluative information.

3. Though the students are generally satisfied with the sex information course, they expressed a desire for more discussion in place of lecturing. This is not an unusual feeling of students. Attaining the right level of providing sufficient information so that an informed discussion can be conducted is as much a part of the art of teaching as of the science of teaching. The level varies from class to class and year to year. Seasoned teachers become masters of the art.
   The sex information program teacher should remain sensitive to this concern of the students but not be overwhelmed by it. Sensitivity and experience will yield the right level.
4. The practitioner must maintain communication with LINKS so that the pathway remains open for

collecting data on students who become pregnant for two reasons: a. Verification of the worth of the sex information program so far as reducing unwanted teen pregnancies is concerned is desirable for the school district can better know the cost/benefit ratio of the sex information program, and b. Researchers may find a rich field of data available that could aid them in addressing the national problem of unwanted teen pregnancies.

X. OTHER APPLICATIONS

This practicum effort may be useful for other schools to consider as a way to gain community acceptance of a sex education program at a time when resources are scarce and the feelings about sex education in the schools are not known. Though the curriculum produced by this practicum could theoretically be transferred in its entirety into another school system, the practitioner would not advise any high school administrator to try a direct transplant. The process of studying, defining, and implementing a sex education program was as important, or possibly more important, as the product.

The practitioner feels the practicum design worked well for him and could work equally well in other school districts. However, the design will function only as well as do the people on the faculty and in the community who make the design function. The practitioner was

fortunate to be able to work with the many able and enlightened persons named throughout this report.

XI. DISSEMINATION

The practitioner will send this practicum report to the Illinois Office of Education in Chicago and Springfield, Illinois, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, in Washington, D. C., and to the Superintendent and Board of Education of the New Trier Township High Schools.

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* Additional bibliographies are included in the appendix, p.125, and p.126.